

Appointments and Governance Committee

21/22 A meeting of the Appointments and Governance Committee was held via Teams on Monday 18 October 2021 at 1.30 pm.

Present: -

The President, Dr P.R. Preston (in the Chair, recused for Minute 21/31)

The Vice-President, Mrs H. Gordon

The Vice-President, Mrs K. Owen (in the Chair for Minute 21/31)

Member of the Council, Mrs S. Maple

The Vice-Chancellor

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (recused for Minute 21/33)

Mr James Magee

By invitation: -

The Vice-President, Mr T. Beardmore-Gray

The University Secretary

Head of Governance (Secretary)

21/23 **Minutes of the last meeting**

The Committee received and approved the Minutes of its meeting held on 8 June 2021.

21/24 **Matters arising**

It was noted that the Council had approved the establishment of the Group for appointing a new Chancellor. The Group had met on several occasions and a role description had been produced. A consultation on the desired characteristics for a Chancellor was currently ongoing.

Matters for Report

21/25 Membership and Terms of Reference (Item 2)

The Committee received and noted its membership and terms of reference. The Committee were reminded that there was one vacancy to be filled following John Taylor's resignation (see Minute 21/30)

21/26 Disclosures of Interests and Risk Register (Item 3)

The Committee received and noted a paper from the University Secretary in regard to Disclosures of Interests.

The Committee noted the Risk Register for 2021/22.

21/27 Reports of Committees of Selection (Item 4)

The Committee received a report of a Committee of Selection for a Professorial appointment in the School of Law, noting that the Vice-Chancellor chaired the panel.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Committee that whilst the University continued to have in place an extra layer of scrutiny around staff approvals, there was a need to replace in areas of staff turnover and to invest in areas of growth.

21/28 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 5)

The Committee received the report of the University Executive Board noting in particular proposals in regard to external appointments to academic leadership roles.

Appointment Matters

21/29 Membership of the Council in Class 2 (Item 6 a)

The Committee noted a statement of the present overall position in respect of lay membership of the Council.

21/30 Committee Vacancies (Item 6 b)

The Committee noted that with John Taylor's resignation as of 31 July 2021, Council was one lay member short. There were no candidates from the last round of interviews who were deemed suitable to approach to fill this vacancy. It was important that all lay vacancies were filled through a transparent recruitment process.

It was also noted that Simon Pryce and Paul Preston would also both finish their membership of Council on 31 July 2022. See Minute 21/31 in regard to appointment of the President.

It was proposed that the Committee recommend to Council that it recruit to two vacancies early in 2022 such that one could begin as soon as possible, and one could begin on 1 August 2022. The Committee suggested that Council could manage with one lay member short for most or even all

of one year. The Committee should agree what skills should be prioritised in recruitment, having due regard to the skills matrix.

The Vice-Presidents (Kate Owen and Helen Gordon) informed the Committee that as part of the review of the CUC Code on the Effectiveness of Council it had been proposed to undertake a deeper analysis of the skill set of lay members of Council. It was suggested that this piece of work could be incorporated into the annual appraisal of lay members, which could be allocated between the President and the Vice-Presidents. This analysis would help identify gaps in the skill set of Council. This piece of work could be undertaken before the recruitment process for new lay members was started.

The Vice-Chancellor agreed that it would be helpful to have a more detailed narrative from lay members outlining their experience and expertise; the skills matrix as currently composed did not help to pull out detailed connections.

The Committee was supportive of this approach, noting that more experience would be helpful in the areas of land/property, HR, commercial, transformational change, or broader governance.

The Committee noted that John Taylor's departure left a vacancy on Appointments and Governance Committee and Remuneration Committee. It was agreed that this vacancy would be left open for the time being.

[The President recused himself from the meeting for this item]

21/31 **Appointment of the President (Item 6 c)**

The Committee received a paper in regard to appointment of the President; Dr Preston's term of office would end on 31 July 2022.

As with the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor and the Chancellor, the process should be clearly communicated to the University community and should be as transparent as possible.

As a matter of good governance, the President should not be involved in the process of appointing his successor, nor should any member of Council who was considering applying.

It was proposed that an interview panel should be established to manage the recruitment process and after the conclusion of that process, recommend an appointment to the Appointments and Governance Committee, who if approved, would share the recommendation with the Senate and make that recommendation to the Council.

It was practice that the longest serving Vice-President of the Council chair the interview panel, and it was therefore proposed that Kate Owen act as Chair. The Vice-Chancellor would not be a member of the interview panel (though as with the President he would be available for discussion with interested candidates should they so request). The membership of the interview panel would be drawn from the membership of Council and should be at least half lay. It was proposed that the panel comprise six, plus the Chair, with three lay members and the three other members drawn from as broad a range of internal members as possible.

Consideration would also need to be given as to whether there should be involvement of other members of Council in the process – for example, whether short-listed candidates should meet with a small group of selected Council members not on the main interview panel, for a structured discussion which could be fed into the deliberations of the main panel. This would help broaden

the ownership of the decision and would help to inform short-listed candidates of what sort of Council they would be coming into.

It was suggested that headhunters would not be used in the process initially. Anecdotally, there were mixed views as to the efficacy of headhunters in these processes; and there was arguably merit in interested candidates having direct access to the University rather than messages being relayed through another organisation.

The Committee were asked to forward any comments on the proposal to Kate Owen and Richard Messer.

21/32 **Appointment of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience (Item 6 d)**

The Committee received a paper from the Vice-Chancellor in regard to appointment of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience.

It was noted that Professor Julian Park had resigned from the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) from the end of this term. This role was in a job share with Professor Elizabeth McCrum, who would continue. The Committee was asked to approve the appointment of a like for like replacement for Professor Park, to start on 1 January 2022, and to finish six years from date of appointment.

The job share PVC for Education and Student Experience (McCrum and Park, each at 0.8) had worked well and it was not proposed to change it relatively soon after it had begun. Moreover, the University's performance in student experience as measured in the National Student Survey was one which most needed improvement.

The Committee was responsible for recommending to the Council the number and remits of Pro-Vice-Chancellors. It was also the responsibility of the Committee to approve whether each role be fixed term or permanent. The University policy in regard to recruitment was that the expectation for fixed term appointments of Pro-Vice-Chancellors, adverts were placed internally only, with a move to external only if recruitment was unsuccessful, whereas for permanent appointments, recruitment was external from the start.

It was recommended, therefore, that a fixed term appointment at 0.8 FTE and an internal only advert be placed.

The Selection Panel was proposed as follows:

- The President of Council
- The Vice-Chancellor
- Professor Clare Furneaux, an experienced Teaching and Learning Dean, member of Senate and former member of Council
- Grace Loweth, RUSU Welfare Officer and member of Council
- Lucy Evans, Chief Student Officer, University of Surrey (external)

In attendance:

- Dr Richard Messer: Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary
- HR Partner

[The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Yaqoob was recused for Minute 21/33]

21/33 Appointment of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (additional item)

The Committee noted that the term of office for Deputy Vice-Chancellor would end on 31 December 2021. The Vice-Chancellor proposed that Professor Yaqoob be reappointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for a further period of two years from 1 January 2022.

The Committee approved the proposal for recommendation to the Council and recorded its thanks to Professor Yaqoob for all her hard work as Deputy Vice-Chancellor over the last two years.

Governance Matters

21/34 CUC Code of Governance (Item 7)

a) Update on Progress

The Committee received and noted an update report on actions arising from the Review of the Effectiveness of Council.

The Committee were asked to:

- 1) note the progress made against the actions identified in the review of the effectiveness of Council, and in particular the Committee's involvement in the following actions:
 - Actions 2b, 2c, 2d – building better links between the Council and the University
 - Action 5a – assurance that the requirements of the Code have been met, including annual reports
 - Action 10b – through the skills matrix to discuss where there is a match of skills needed by the University and provided by lay members and to determine how those skills could best be harnessed
 - Action 12 – to consider recruiting to specified roles.
- 2) receive the skills matrix and discuss where there was a match of skills needed by the University and provided by lay members, and determine how, without crossing the line between governance and management, those skills could best be harnessed.

Members of the Committee were asked to forward any comments on the web page mockup to the University Secretary.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have the web page available by the November meeting of Council and ahead of the All-Staff Talk in December.

The Committee recorded its thanks to Eleanor Saxon for her work on the review.

b) Presentation from the Vice-Presidents

The Vice-Presidents (Kate Owen and Helen Gordon) gave a presentation to the Committee on better links between the skills and interests of lay members of Council and the University.

It was suggested that further connections would be helpful to:

- Provide skills for major change projects/developments – the President and Vice-Presidents could talk to lay members about their skills, knowledge, and interests. This information could then be used to produce a skills map that could be used to map lay members to projects/developments as required.

- Develop individuals – providing knowledge to Council on topics of interest, buddying between Council members, induction programmes for new members, as well as providing buddying/mentoring between staff and Council members.
- Ambassadorial – check the provision of information to Council members to enable them to speak up for the University; brief the Council on significant changes and the messaging around these.

The aim of this work would help to: release capacity and skills to focus on specific issues; help Council members feel supported, developed, and able to better apply their skills. It would also help to avoid: Council members ‘getting in the way’, increased bureaucracy, complexity, ‘royal visits’ of lay members to Schools/Functions without real purpose.

The Committee were asked the following questions:

- What would be most helpful for the University?
- How could we use the skills audit to match lay members to big issues/change as and when needed?
- And what were priority areas of need for the University in the year ahead where lay member support could be helpful? Commercial deals, major changes, complex change?

It was suggested that lay member support around projects to deliver the University Strategy would be helpful. A list of the projects would be submitted to the Council meeting in November; it would be helpful to dovetail this with the skills audit and to have a further discussion on this matter at the Council meeting.

21/35 **OfS Statement of Expectations – preventing and addressing sexual misconduct and harassment (Item 8)**

The Committee noted that the OfS had now published their Statement of Expectations on preventing and addressing sexual misconduct and harassment. A Group had been established Chaired by the University Secretary to monitor progress in this area and ensure compliance with the Statement.

It was reported that the OfS had written to institutions in June stating that they expected this work to be complete by the start of the academic year 2021/22. A number of institutions had discussed this timeframe with the OfS as this was a substantial piece of work and not a tick box exercise.

It was noted that a considerable amount of work was already ongoing in this area but that the pandemic had slowed progress. A meeting was to be held later in the week that would inform the timeline going forward.

It was agreed that this item should be reported to the Council through the Student Experience Committee.

21/36 **Report on Prevent (Item 9)**

The Committee received a report on Prevent and was asked to note the following:

1. the changes the OfS had made to reporting on the 2020-21 academic year;
2. the Summary of annual accountability and data returns from across the HE Sector: 2017-2020

It was noted that on 28 September 2021, the OfS had published the revised 'Prevent monitoring: guidance for accountability and data return (ADR) 2021'. This related to activity in the 2020-21 academic year. A summary of the changes OfS had made the following changes to the 2021 return included:

1. OfS had removed the requirement for providers to submit an accountability statement, but had retained the declarations that should be signed off by the chair of the governing body;
2. OfS had removed the requirement for providers to submit data about the total number of events that had been referred to the highest decision maker;
3. OfS required a more detailed breakdown of the number of Prevent cases that providers had managed, to allow them to understand the types of potential radicalisation cases that had been dealt with under the following categories:
 - Islamist radicalisation;
 - Extreme right-wing radicalisation;
 - Mixed, unstable, or unclear ideology;
 - Other radicalisation.
4. OfS required a more detailed breakdown of the number of speakers or events not approved by a provider and the reasons for these rejections;
5. OfS had introduced a requirement to report on the total number of speakers or events approved subject to mitigations

The Prevent Duty Group had met on 4 October 2021 and had regard to the above changes. Unhelpfully, the changes had come in at short notice ahead of the return deadline of 1 December 2021 for the 2020-21 reporting period. Every endeavour would be made to provide adequate detail on potential radicalisation cases categorised under the ideologies listed above for the 2021 return as requested by the OfS. In future, HR, Student Services Welfare Team and Events Team would record any potential radicalisation cases in alignment with the new OfS requirement to categorise ideologies as set out above.

The Committee authorised the President to sign the Prevent return on behalf of the Council.

21/37 **Report of the Personal Titles Process 2020-21 (Item 10)**

The Committee received the report on the number of appeals raised against decisions taken through the personal titles process, and any recommendations as to changes in process recommended as a result of appeals.

It was noted that cases for personal titles were considered first at School level. They either decide to pass the cases to the University stage or reject. The reason for rejection would be given against one or more of the criteria which an applicant had to meet. An Appeals Committee chaired by an independent member ([redacted, section 40] former Vice-President of Council) heard appeals after the School committees had met. [redacted, section 40].

The University Personal Titles Committee considered the cases passed on by the School Committee. They took the final decision as to whether the personal title should be bestowed.

When an applicant's case was rejected, the reason would be given against one or more of the criteria which an applicant had to meet. In 2020-21, 84 applications were submitted to the University Committee, 60 of which were successful. Last year there were 96 applications with 60 successful. The percentage success rate of 71% was higher than last year's of 62%. Unsuccessful candidates were given 3 weeks to appeal against the decision.

An Appeals Committee chaired by an independent member ([redacted, section 40], former lay member of Council) heard eligible appeals. The Chair considered the eligibility of each appeal submitted. His decision as to eligibility was communicated to each applicant, with reasons. On occasion he determined that some but not all of the grounds were eligible. On this occasion he determined that the appeal was not eligible. No procedural changes had been identified at appeals stage.

It was noted that [redacted, section 40] had indicated that he wished to step down from his role with School stage appeals. [redacted, section 40] had also indicated that he might step down before next year, but if not, then soon after. These were important roles to fill, and it was suggested that Council members with HR, Legal or Governance experience be asked if they were content to fulfil one or other of these roles.

21/38 **Any other business**

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Committee that a year ago the Secretary of State had written to all Vice-Chancellors strongly urging them to adopt the IHRA definition of Anti-Semitism.

The Vice-Chancellor and University Secretary had met with the Lord Mann (Anti-Semitism Tsar) where they had outlined how the University intended to undertake a programme of work to deal with all discrimination and racial harassment as part of the Race Equality Review.

The OfS had now written to all universities stating that they would publish a list of all those institutions who had not signed up to the definition. Reading would be included on that list alongside a number of other institutions.

The Committee noted that the Vice-Chancellor was comfortable with the approach that was being taken through the Race Equality Review, and that adoption of the definition was not a regulatory matter.

21/39 **Dates of Meetings in Session 2021-22**

Thursday 3 February 2022 at 3.30 pm

Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 12.00 pm